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COUNCIL DATE: May 2, 2016

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **May 2, 2016**

FROM: **Chair, Surrey Libraries Board
Chief Librarian**

FILE: **Strategic Plan**

SUBJECT: **Surrey Libraries Strategic Plan, 2016 – 2018**

RECOMMENDATION

The Surrey Libraries Board of Trustees recommends that Council receive as information the Surrey Libraries Strategic Plan for 2016 – 2018, a copy of which is attached to this report as Appendix “1”.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide information about the Strategic Plan that has been developed for Surrey Libraries that will assist in guiding the activities of staff and the decisions of the Board for the years 2016 through 2018.

BACKGROUND

Long respected in their traditional roles as supporting life-long learning, libraries are now emerging as key community organizations that enhance community engagement through programs, workshops and volunteer opportunities and assist in addressing the ‘digital divide’ by offering access to technology and digital literacy skills. Libraries are now places where people not only consume knowledge but provide access to tools and ideas that spark innovation and create new knowledge.

The increased use of technology to distribute information means that reading, listening and viewing materials are moving towards digital formats such as ebooks, streaming audio and electronic journals. Online access to resources and services through the Surrey Libraries website at www.surreylibraries.ca is expanding. A new website to be completed in 2016 / 2017 will result in increased traffic, an already busy site that currently receives 1.7 million visits a year. (This statistic includes hits to the website and visits to BiblioCommons, the library’s online catalogue.) While the popularity of ebooks, emagazines and other online resources is climbing, interest in print and audio / visual items such as DVDs, remains strong, especially for children’s materials and books for teens. In 2015, approximately 93% of the library materials circulated in 2015 were print and audio / visual materials.

In the fall of 2015, the Library Board hired a consultant from Vantage Point to assist with the development of a new strategic plan. As part of the process, interviews were conducted with community members, customers were asked to respond to an online survey and an environmental scan was completed. The Vision, Mission and Values statements were also reviewed as part of the process.

The draft Strategic Plan was presented to the Surrey Libraries Board at its regular meeting on February 25 2016, at which time the Board adopted the Plan and requested that it be presented to City Council.

As the City of Surrey takes its place as one of the economic engines of BC, the Library is here to support the lifelong learning needs of residents.

DISCUSSION

The Strategic Plan for 2016 - 2018 re-affirms the Library's commitment to its Vision, Mission and Values statement. The Plan also outlines the 3 strategic priorities that will focus our work over the next three years, each of which is supported by a list of actions and/or outcomes.

In setting the strategic priorities for the Surrey Libraries, we will:

1. Strive for excellence in member services
2. Engage with the community
3. Inspire the community

The Board and the staff of Surrey Libraries will use the Strategic Plan as the basis for developing annual work plans and to assist in decision-making. The Board will be provided with regular updates by staff on progress that is being made in relation to the various actions that are referenced in the Plan.

In addition, the new library branch in Clayton Heights, co-located with Parks, Recreation and Culture will result in opportunities for partnership and innovation that will continue to build community in this growing neighbourhood. \$39.75 million has been allocated for this project, with completion scheduled for 2019 / 2020. The initial conceptual planning for this project has been completed, with more detailed planning for the project to be undertaken in the coming months.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Surrey Libraries play an important role in achieving the City of Surrey's goals and priorities. The Library fosters a vibrant downtown, creates a sense of place and is a municipal presence in each town centre. Libraries support digital inclusion and provide services for people engaged in the creative economy. They are welcoming environments for newcomers and refugees, offering information and language learning assistance. They offer literacy based programs and services for all ages, from emerging readers to seniors; to children preparing for future success at school and for those with visual and other disabilities.

The Surrey Libraries' Strategic Plan also reflects the direction set by the City of Surrey and supports the City's vision for an engaged citizenry and the delivery of cost effective, relevant, customer-focused services. The Plan considers the goals outlined in the **Surrey Sustainability Charter** and also addresses the objectives of the City's Social Well-Being Plan, Age Friendly Strategy, Smart Surrey Strategy, Poverty Reduction and Crime Reduction Plans.

Examples of current initiatives undertaken by the Library under the headings established by the **Sustainability Charter** are as follows:

Inclusion: (Diversity, Poverty Reduction, Social Infrastructure and Age Friendly Community)

The Library

- welcomes people from around the globe, offering tools to learn English (print and online), find work, communicate with people back home as well as opportunities to volunteer through the Library Champions programs;
- helps to address poverty issues by offering free access to collections, workshops on topics such as financial literacy, early literacy programs for children and a barrier free place to participate in community. In 2015, the Library Board approved the elimination of fines on children's materials, to ensure that all children have improved access to books, DVDS and homework help;
- provides services for people of all ages, ranging from storytimes for kids to services for seniors who are unable to visit the library in person or have visual disabilities;
- works with over 60 community partners to deliver programs and services, such as technology training in a number of languages;
- visits community agencies such as the Food Bank, homeless shelters and immigrant serving agencies.

Built Environments and Neighbourhoods

- helps to create a sense of belonging and delivers services at the neighbourhood level;
- builds capacity for community driven projects by offering meeting space and expertise.

Public Safety

- participates in local initiatives to help resolve issues;
- offers after school programming for kids and teens, to build skills and confidence, including creative writing programs, gaming and job hunting programs;
- helps to address underlying issues of poor literacy skills and poverty.

Economic Prosperity and Livelihoods

- supports the learning and research needs of entrepreneurs and small businesses;
- offers technology training and job search skills for those seeking employment;
- provides access to technology to support mobile workers (wifi, computer workstations, temporary space to work from); and
- increasingly for those participating in the creative economy, offers tools such as film editing software, green screens, etc.

Ecosystems

- offers innovative programming, such as a Seed Library and lending of energy meters

Education and Culture

- offers a diverse range of learning opportunities for individuals and groups and in a variety of formats, through print and electronic collections, such as the newly acquired Lynda.com (online learning platform);
- supports local authors and poets through programs and services, displays art by local artists and celebrates the diversity of our city at community focused events such as Diwali, Lunar New Year;
- offers low barrier informal learning opportunities, supports personalised learning and homework help; and
- works with community partners to encourage early literacy and learning, for example the Avenues of Change project in Guildford West

Health and Wellness

- provides access to current information to assist people in managing health related issues;
- partners with community agencies to offer programs on health management; and
- offers many opportunities to participate in community, thus increasing a sense of belonging and connectedness

Infrastructure

- provides free access to telecommunications in all branches, including computer workstations, wifi and other technological infrastructure; and
- offers hand-on technology training through the 4 Computer Learning Centres

CONCLUSION

The Surrey Libraries Strategic Plan that is attached to this report as Appendix I will act guide the actions and decisions of the Libraries Board and Libraries staff over the course of the years from 2016 through 2018.

Upkar Tatlay
Chair, Surrey Libraries Board

Melanie Houlden
Chief Librarian



Surrey Libraries Strategic Plan for 2016 – 2018

Vision: Where the power of knowledge inspires people to build a better future

Mission: We connect people to lifelong learning, information, and ideas

Values: We

- Create welcoming spaces shared by all
- Connect people and ideas
- Engage the community
- Inspire creativity and innovation
- Take leadership in promoting the value of literacy and a love of learning
- Advocate for intellectual freedom

Success: Every resident recognizes Surrey Libraries as a community leader in supporting creativity, connectivity, literacy and lifelong learning.

Strategic Priorities:

Surrey Libraries will:

1. Strive for excellence in member services

We will:

- Improve the selection of materials in the collections, in a variety of formats, that meet the needs of the communities we serve
- Work to provide new facilities in underserved areas and improve access where possible
- Expand the technological infrastructure to ensure reliable connectivity and capacity for growth
- Improve communications and marketing efforts, both internally and externally
- Recruit excellent staff and invest in staff development
 - Hire staff that are adaptable and focused on service to the community
 - Ensure that staff are engaged in the work of the Library and motivated to do their best
 - Identify training and development needs

2. Engage with the community

We will:

- Identify community needs and invite participation in developing programs and services with a focus on families and children, youth, newcomers, seniors, urban aboriginals and millennials
- Collaborate with partners to improve the social well-being of our community, with special emphasis on improving outcomes for children 0 – 12 and their caregivers
- Increase opportunities for engagement through programs and outreach
- Create welcoming, safe & accessible spaces
- Implement strong data collection, analysis and evaluation methods

3. Inspire the community

We will:

- Provide connections to ideas or to other people through collections, technology and experiences
- Inspire people to become creators by offering innovative programs and services
- Support the digital literacy needs of our members through training and access to learning tools
- Encourage a love of reading, learning, curiosity and imagination
- Inform and educate stakeholders on the value of the Library in the community